

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
AND THE PLEASANT HILL CITY COUNCIL
Monday, February 6, 2017 (6:00 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Harris called a special joint meeting of the Pleasant Hill City Council and Mount Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) Board of Directors to order at 6:02 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 100 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, California.

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

Roll Call was conducted with all Pleasant Hill City Council members present, and all Board of Education members present with the exception of Brian Lawrence.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Fisher, Foundation for Pleasant Hill Education Green Team, reported that AB 1826, effective as of January 1, 2017, required three Pleasant Hill schools to separate food and green waste from other waste and recyclables. Ms. Fisher explained that the Green Team has been working with teachers and students to develop programs to separate the items, but that it should have been the responsibility of the Mount Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD). She questioned MDUSD's commitment to complying with AB 1826.

Sheila Hill, Foundation for Pleasant Hill Education Green Team, presented a District resolution passed 15 years earlier regarding reusing, reducing, and recycling. Ms. Hill explained her concerns that MDUSD is not supporting efforts in waste management. She reported that students and parents are volunteering their time to handle food waste recycling, but stated that is the responsibility of MDUSD staff to manage the project.

Emma Crowe, Contra Costa County Climate Leaders, Student and Earth Club Member, Sequoia Middle School, requested composting bins at Sequoia Middle School. Ms. Crowe also requested assistance from MDUSD regarding food waste recycling.

Monika Olsen, Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden, requested the formation of a steering committee to manage and address the issues concerning food waste recycling and disposal. Ms. Olsen commented that the Pittsburg School District applied for a grant to hire a part-time custodian to handle food waste recycling.

Anne Baker, Recycling Coordinator, Republic Services, provided background on AB 341, which requires most businesses and schools to recycle and AB 1826, which requires businesses and schools to compost. Ms. Baker reported that all schools are required to comply with AB 1826 by 2019, and that she met with local school representatives regarding composting in cafeterias and eating areas. She noted that the logistics of the composting program is currently left to each school to manage instead of having a comprehensive program across all schools.

Ms. Baker remarked that school custodians have limited resources to assist with composting and suggested that MDUSD revise custodial job descriptions to include composting duties.

Queenie Li, Student and Earth Club Member, College Park High School, reported that the College Park High School Earth Club developed a plan for composting, but the compost bins never arrived. Ms. Li asked the City for assistance.

Abhiram Mokkaapati, Student and Earth Club Member, Sequoia Middle School, explained his desire to promote recycling at Sequoia Middle School noting that recycling would benefit students, the school at large, and the community.

REPORTS/INFORMATION

4.1 Presentation on Counselor Roles at Pleasant Hill Schools

President Mason introduced Dr. Nellie Meyer, Superintendent. Dr. Meyer reported that school counselors had not been in place since 1992 and were brought back on May 24, 2014. Dr. Meyer presented an update on counseling and related programs, including John F. Kennedy University (JFKU) interns working in local schools. Dr. Meyer introduced three JFKU interns working at Pleasant Hill middle and elementary schools.

The interns reported on their work at their assigned schools.

Dr. Meyer explained that high schools would offer post high school and college counseling which would include transcript evaluation for entry into college; career counseling; and hosting college nights.

In response to Councilmember Noack's question regarding hiring high school counselors, Dr. Meyer responded that a total of sixty counselors would be hired for the MDUSD schools.

4.2 Discussion Regarding Class Size Reduction in Pleasant Hill vs. the District

Dr. Meyer made a presentation on class sizes for College Park High School feeder schools and explained the key factors that impact class size. Dr. Meyer commented that MDUSD would move to the classroom size goal of 24 students per one teacher by year 2020.

Councilmember Noack commented on the diversity of class size numbers whereby some teachers have large class sizes and others have a smaller number of students.

Dr. Meyer explained that a decision last year to not move students from Pleasant Hill Elementary School to Gregory Gardens created a higher student to teacher ratio. Dr. Meyer noted that those numbers have since decreased.

Mayor Harris invited Cheryl Kolano, Principal of Gregory Gardens Elementary School, to speak.

Cheryl Kolano, Principal, Gregory Gardens Elementary School, explained that last year children were kept at their home schools which created differences in classroom sizes. Ms. Kolano stated that she and her staff are working to keep the classroom sizes manageable.

Public Comment:

Emily Richards, Chairperson, Pleasant Hill Education Commission, asked if Hidden Valley Elementary School was included in the statistics.

Dr. Meyer responded that Hidden Valley Elementary School was included.

4.3 Discussion Regarding Capacity Issues in the District (Pleasant Hill Transfers vs. Other Schools)

Dr. Meyer made a presentation which explained the factors taken into consideration for determining student enrollment capacity at each school. She also explained the student transfer process and stated that College Park and Northgate High Schools would not be taking transfers except under extenuating circumstances.

In response to Councilmember Noack's question about enrollment at College Park High School, Dr. Meyer responded that 2,020 students are enrolled at College Park High School and that enrollment would not exceed the capacity numbers as presented.

Public Comment:

Monika Olsen, Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden, asked if the staffing numbers include non-teaching staff. Ms. Olsen commented that the Green Team would like to have a salad bar at Pleasant Hill Middle School.

Dr. Meyer said that the numbers include teaching and non-teaching staff and that there is a shortage of food service workers. Dr. Meyer commented that she would need to talk with the Director of Food Services regarding a salad bar, but a new position would be created to support student nutrition and culinary arts programs.

Joann Jacobs, Pleasant Hill Education Commission, asked for clarification on the status of the eighth grade students completing their year at Pine Hollow Middle School.

Dr. Meyer explained that these students would be given priority placement at five other high schools if they decide not to attend Clayton Valley Charter High School. She reported that five students would be attending College Park High School and the remainder would be divided between Concord and Northgate High Schools. Dr. Meyer explained that priority placement would mean the students would be able to attend their resident schools, but would not override the priority of current resident students.

Mary Gray, Pleasant Hill Education Commission, asked how capacity is determined.

Dr. Meyer responded that capacity is a moveable target and noted that the goal is to keep the enrollment flat in the schools. She commented that capacity does include the portable classrooms, but does not include bathrooms.

4.4 Discussion Regarding District Policy on Address Checking at College Park High School

Dr. Meyer explained the process in checking and verifying student addresses and that investigations are conducted on credible reports of address misuse.

Councilmember Noack commented that her address has not been checked since her son was in kindergarten.

Dr. Meyer responded that addresses for transfer students are checked more regularly than residents, but a more robust process on address checking and verification should be implemented.

Mayor Harris commented that the Pleasant Hill Education Commission has raised this issue many times.

MDUSD Board Member Hansen responded that addresses should be monitored more regularly.

4.5 Update on the Northgate CAPS Proposal to Secede from Mt. Diablo Unified School District

Dr. Meyer stated that a MDUSD Board presentation was made in December 2016 and that a large number of teachers and staff expressed that they would not support the Northgate secession from MDUSD. Dr. Meyer explained the criteria for separating from MDUSD and stated that the Board opposed separation.

MDUSD Board Members and Councilmembers discussed the process and criteria of separation and the potential impact on MDUSD.

Public Comment:

Cherise Khaund, Walnut Creek, asked if Pleasant Hill had taken a position on the proposed secession.

Mayor Harris responded that the City has not taken a position.

Councilmember Noack commented that the City has received numerous questions about the proposed secession but had not discussed the matter.

4.6 Report from the District on the Impact of Holbrook Elementary School Opening on Pleasant Hill Elementary Schools

Dr. Meyer reported that Holbrook Elementary School would be reopening in August, 2017, as a regional magnet school focused on STEM, language immersion and culture, and the impact on capacity at other local elementary schools.

Mayor Harris asked if the reopening of Holbrook Elementary School would affect the number of students anticipated to attend local middle schools.

Dr. Meyer responded that registration would begin the next day so she did not have exact enrollment numbers. Dr. Meyer noted that most Holbrook students would attend El Dorado Middle School and then Concord High School.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Harris adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Nellie Meyer, Superintendent